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A FOOTNOTE: "AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF MORMON"

By WALTER FRANKLIN PRINCE, Ph.D.

My attention has been called to an article by Mr. Theodore Schroeder in the January issue of this magazine, by way of "reply" to my paper in the July, 1917, issue, entitled "Psychological Tests for the Authorship of the Book of Mormon."

Had my argument solely consisted of the *disjuncta membra* which he has torn bleeding from the body of it, it would indeed have deserved contempt. To anyone who has read the emasculated and perverted version all I need to say is, go back and read, for the second or first time, the argument which I really did make. And let him note that the theme is not the authorship of the Book of Mormon (which must by a variety of proofs be awarded, at least in the main, to Joseph Smith) but the contribution which certain psychological tests make to the settlement of the question. Readers who carefully ponder the array of correspondences which I put upon exhibit will not have difficulty in perceiving their collective weight.

But Mr. Schroeder speaks with such confidence about my mental peculiarities (as though these had any bearings upon the data presented), and with such authority about Mormon literature, that I must add a few words of warning.

Unfortunately in his "psychoanalysis" of my humble self he has discovered, as Josh Billings would say, "much that ain't so." He assumes:

(1) That I am a Freudian, which is not true, save in a very modified sense.

(2) That I was governed by "complexes" in the composition of my article. This seems a gratuitous assumption as the strength of the article is in its facts, which remain the same whatever my "complexes." Perhaps the analyzer remembered that he had to explain, in connection with one title in a list of his published papers, "This letter was written under pro-Mormon sympathies which made the author believe he was answering the 'church and state' accusation." He should not so rashly ascribe to others his own emotional tendencies.

(3) That my particular "obsession" is an "anti-secret-society complex." And I a Free-Mason myself, without any prejudices or emotional shocks related to Masonry!

(4) That I arbitrarily chose to fix the authorship of the Book of Mormon upon Joseph Smith. Why on earth would I do that? On the contrary it was the psychological reflections in the book, together with the reflections of the period and region in which he lived, which focussed upon him.

(5) That I am ignorant of the historical facts, whereas I have been familiar with the *pro* and *con* of these for many years. I did not give the whole history of the Kirtland Bank because it would have been irrelevant. The particular device which suggested itself to Smith's mind in his bank difficulty was the only pertinent feature of it.

(6) That I neglected "Doctrine and Covenants" in the application of the tests. Yet my paper plainly sets forth similar reactions in both this and other acknowledged utterances of Smith.

(7) That I was unaware that Smith was afterwards a Mason, or that this matters. He may have been a Mason before the Book of Mormon was written for all that I know. Thousands of Masons left their lodges in disgust in 1826-27, and many afterwards reentered them.

I take space for only two or three of Mr. Schroeder's queer misunderstandings of my statements, and lapses through insufficient acquaintance with the Mormon literary material which he has written so much about.

He declares that I "assume" that the secret society contents of the Book of Mormon was a subconscious product. On the contrary I assumed that the whole book was a conscious one, but conceded the mere possibility that it was written in a secondary or dreamy state.

Why he should be impressed with the necessity of psychoanalyzing me in order to disclose an "anti-secret-society complex," when he himself recognizes that there *are* anti-secret-society passages in the Book of Mormon, is a mystery.

He reproaches me for not going to "Doctrine and Covenants," an acknowledged work of Smith (by "revelation"), and at the same time supposes that the inventions "Olihah" and "tahhanes" are in the Book of Mormon. If he had known the literature of his youth better he would have been aware that it is in "Doctrine and Covenants" that these odd terms are found, or he might by reading my article less carelessly have been informed. If my friend will call on me, I will show him my copy of "Doctrine and Covenants," filled with annotations calling attention to quaint locutions which also characterize the Book of Mormon, but are not found in the extant work of Solomon Spaulding.

Since Mr. Schroeder pins his faith to the naïve theory of Spaulding's authorship, he should have explained how the Book of Mormon happens to contain visions which Lucy Smith unintentionally revealed, in a little book which Brigham Young vainly endeavored to suppress because of its damnatory significance, were the dreams of her husband, whose son, Joseph Smith the prophet, was familiar with them from his childhood.